DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 095 999 PS 007 428

AUTHOR Orr, John B.
TITLE Cognitive-Developmental Approaches to Moral Education: A Social Ethical Analysis.
PUB DATE [73]
NOTE 25p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Pluralism; Culture Conflict; Developmental Psychology; *Educational Theories; *Elementary Education; Maturation; *Moral Development; Moral Values; School Community Relationship; *School Responsibility; Socialization
IDENTIFIERS Kohlberg (Lawrence); *Piaget (Jean)

ABSTRACT

This essay critically views the prescriptions of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg concerning moral education within the public schools. Piaget's paradigm of the moral life is elaborated, and his prescriptive theories for the schools are presented. In contrast to Durkheim, Piaget argues that schools should resist adult-imposed moral rules whenever possible, and must not assume the responsibility for representing the values of the larger society. The author contends that the arguments of Piaget and Kohlberg lead to an educational sectarianism, which has the effect of encouraging an autonomous insensitivity to the way in which the political world works, and turns the school into an unrealistic isolate world. In addition, it is argued that Kohlberg's theories for moral education are wholly within the framework of the liberal welfare model; that is, directed toward reducing the number and treatment of deviants through judiciary, police, welfare, and psychological services. The effect of Kohlberg's theses has been to compromise the radicalism of Piaget's initial logic. Piaget's American colleagues, as representatives of an educationally liberal tradition, find themselves in the paradoxical situation of attempting to affirm the basic soundness of present institutions, while at the same time striving to use as much of the sectarian, radical rhetoric as possible. (CS)

ED 095999

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PS 007428

Cognitive-Developmental Approaches to Moral Education: A Social Ethical Analysis

[John B. Orr]

In this essay, I intend to view critically the prescriptions of Jean Piaget and his American colleague Lawrence Kohlberg in their capacity as advisors concerning moral education within public schools. Both are currently at the center of a renaissance of interest in moral education. Under their leadership, a number of educators have made impressive attempts to reconstruct the moral managerial activity of the schools on the basis of empirically defensible generalizations about how children mature. And these educators are emerging with a political-educational strategy for moral education--a strategy that is hardly neutral. When Kohlberg claims, for example, that those who work with his cognitive-developmental scheme for moral education are proceeding on a "natural," not a conventional or ideological basis, he is speaking much too simply. Piaget's and Kohlberg's approaches to moral education are constituted in a series of empirical generalizations, ethical assertions, and

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

political strategies, all of which hold together in a reasonably coherent way, but hardly in a way that constitutes a self-evident schema. The commitments involved in their work deserve the closest scrutiny, if only because they are assuming such social importance, and because in the next few years they undoubtedly will provide the basis for a considerable amount of research and institutional experimentalism.

To be candid, my few disagreements with Piaget and Kohlberg are very much in-house matters. Although I did not choose to follow Piaget in rejecting philosophy as a base for investigating the worlds of children, I nevertheless was attracted to his agenda, and even to the methods he employed. In choosing to be a psychologist rather than a philosopher, Piaget chose a model of science profoundly influenced by his philosophical background. And it is this joining of philosophical knowledgeability and social scientific commitment that constitutes his genius. From my perspective, Piaget's own style requires, or at least suggests, the appropriateness of criticism and development within both the disciplines that he somehow is able to synthesize.

I. The Schools and Moral Pluralism

Most people, I suspect, will readily agree with

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Piaget that schools are in the business of encouraging moral respectability among children. To suggest that schools operate in this capacity is, of course, to say nothing new, because it is commonplace to acknowledge that a community's educational system functions in socializing children into at least some of the community's most fundamental values and in reinforcing the authority of other public institutions (e.g. the churches, the police, the welfare system, and the courts). Schools are moral managers, not in the sense that teachers and administrators are forced to assume professional responsibility for making arbitrary decisions on moral issues and for enforcing these. Rather, schools are moral managers in the far broader sense that the very task of spending time as a viable institution requires that respectability be defined and promoted.

Piaget makes this point when he likens activity within social systems, including schools, to the interaction of players in a game of marbles. In order to interact at all, persons must be able to develop recipes for behavior, rules, or stable expectations. And when these are violated, the system is disrupted and the tasks at hand are made far more difficult to achieve. A consensus concerning respectability is a precondition of ordered social activity.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Ironically, as Piaget also discovers, the rules of the game become much clearer when violations occur, whether in real life or in accounts of fictional situations. The children interviewed for The Moral Judgment of the Child, for example, are asked to reflect on situations where rules have been broken; and only in this context do children provide Piaget with clues concerning their understanding of rules and the authority in terms of which particular conflicts are to be adjudicated. Piaget's experience apparently coincides with Emile Durkheim's observation that every social system needs criminals and occasions for punishment "in order to establish morality."[1] At least from one perspective, moral experience is always a sum-zero game, the awareness of the lines of one's own respectability requiring that others fail. Respectability is the solution to the problem of disorder, but how can there be a solution to a problem that has not been made manifest? In short, there is a social function for deviance; groups will necessarily program their activities both to create and to deal with deviance, because in that way a group is able to have the best of all possible worlds--the stability necessary for its particular version of marbles, and the deviant fringe that constitutes the spectre of chaos when rules are violated. It may not be necessary for

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

there ultimately to be winners and losers in ethical experience; one can at least hope for a situation where everyone wins. But the need for deviance and respectability is another matter. This is the need for demonstrating the parameters within which everyone potentially might be enhanced.

As far as I am aware, Piaget does not speak about "deviance" or "respectability," but he might just as well do so. These are terms that belong to the discussion of moral judgment when morality is viewed as the constitution of social order, and that is precisely the view of morality that Piaget assumes. Differing patterns of moral judgment are differing ways of experiencing and constituting "rules of the game." For Piaget, to speak about moral judgment is to speak about social rules, and the most significant differences in moral judgment are established in contrasting interpretations concerning the nature and authority of these rules.

Piaget's assumptions concerning the definition of morality place him squarely in the functionalist camp, but more important, they arbitrarily delimit the kinds of judgment that will be taken seriously as examples of "moral judgment." For example, Piaget (and subsequently, his American colleagues) apparently do not consider affective/creative/meditative dimensions of human

PS 007428

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

experience as having moral significance, although a substantial romanticist tradition within the history of ethics has located the essence of the moral life precisely there. Likewise, Piaget's view of morality makes short shrift of important intuitionist theories of the moral life, which claim that persons mistakenly identify morality with rules, and mistakenly think that certain patterns of principled reasoning are superior to others. Philosophers like H. A. Prichard, for example, argue that it is an error to separate the formal (abstract) from the substantive (concrete) in ethics. What is obligatory is known only in specific situations where there are choices to be made.[2] Following Prichard, moral education would not have to do with principles or with leading children into "higher" patterns of moral casuistry. Instead, it would attempt to open children's eyes to the vast number of value choices they make and would attempt to sensitize them to the multiplicity of obligations in their environment. According to Prichard, you either see particular instances of obligation or you do not. The problem with children, as with anyone else, is usually one of value blindness, not immaturity in moral reasoning.

In making the game of marbles into a paradigm of the moral life, Piaget's argument is virtually predetermined,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

and, as we shall see, Lawrence Kohlberg brilliantly follows the logic of this argument to its inevitable conclusion. Persons who define morality as social rules will inevitably concern themselves with the origin and authority of those rules, and also with the more abstract principles in terms of which conflicts can be mediated. Ultimately the argument will be about the shape of justice. There is no other way to move.

Not surprisingly, then, Piaget is haunted by the problem of moral pluralism and especially by questions concerning which schemes of respectability and deviance ought to be promoted by the schools. In this regard, he uses Emile Durkheim both as a source of support and as a foil. He agrees with Durkheim that deviance and respectability are political categories, for the simple reason that moral judgments are social constructions and grow out of the spirit of a group's collective life. Moral rules are not rooted in the nature of things; they are not divinely ordained; and they are not universally obligatory. Instead moral rules are shaped as persons interact within particular social systems, and they are relative to those systems. Deviance and respectability in schools cannot everywhere be the same, because childhood takes place within such disparate social settings with such disparate styles and habits of authority.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Piaget's structuralist assumptions do not threaten this fundamental agreement with Durkheim. In tracing the structures of moral judgment that develop as the child grows in his intellectual capacities and in social experience, Piaget delineates age-related patterns that appear to be cross-cultural, hierarchical, and invarient. He carefully distinguishes, however, between forms or structures of moral reasoning and substantive moral rules. The latter belong to convention. The substance of the moral life is thoroughly conventional, and cannot be understood apart from the social context within which concrete moral rules are generated and enforced.

Piaget and Durkheim part company, however, in drawing implications from this doctrine of pluralism for activities within schools. In his 1925 study of moral education, Durkheim had argued that schools are representatives of the community's shared values. Like elders within primitive societies, schools initiate children into the intellectual and moral heritage of the group. Or, to change the metaphor, the schoolmaster serves as a priest, who mediates between society and the child.[3]

Piaget accuses Durkheim and his followers of committing a simple, but devastatingly serious descriptive error. They might have been correct, Piaget argues, if

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

only a single association could be identified as the school's sponsor, but schools do not belong to a single, coherent social system. "There are no such things as societies qua beings,"[4] who exhibit a single, internally consistent body of values. People, including children, do not belong to a single association, or even to a collection of mutually isolatable associations. Society is more complex, holding together a vast number of relations and world views (e.g. religious, cultural, geographical, economic, racial) that both overlap and conflict. Consequently, to turn the schools into an instrument for a particular group's perspective on the moral life is to make schools subservient to only part of the child's social world. Worse, it is to justify the despotism of a group that is capable of grasping enough power to make its will felt in the educational system.

Piaget's distinctive contribution to this complexification of Durkheim is his point that "alongside the social relations between children and adults there exist social relations that apply distinctly to the groups which children form among themselves."[5] These also must be recognized as significant groupings within society, whose values impinge on schools. Age is a source of human community, because persons share a network of age-related conditions that elicit common images of the world and common moral

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

meanings. Among children, the population to which he limited his investigations, Piaget sees that persons can understand each other within age groups, in spite of the fact that particular styles of moral argument are not reinforced by authorities. Age communities function invisibly; they appear to structure the medium for moral discourse among children. The conditions that give rise to shared images and meanings may go unacknowledged; but the consequent sense of being understood by one's own age group is testimony to their force.

In the face of moral pluralism, Piaget's prescription for the schools is shockingly simple. His rejoinder to Durkheim is not that educators should work out a compromise among the associations that expect schools to embody their world views. Instead, he argues that schools should resist adult-imposed moral rules whenever possible, because adult constraint is itself a condition for moral immaturity among children. He does not evaluate competitive systems or competitive styles of rules. In fact, Piaget has little to say about the relative worth of alternative life styles, except when these are associated with contrasting patterns of authority and submissiveness, or with greater or lesser approximations of the ideal of justice.

His surprising prescription takes the form of two

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ideal types (reminiscent of Durkheim's distinction between restitutive and repressive laws)--the "two moralities of the child." The first is characterized by the authority and constraint of adults: "every command coming from a respected person is the starting-point of an obligatory rule."[6] This pattern leads to a kind of mystical feeling towards authority, which nevertheless fits perfectly well with egocentrism. It encourages behavioral inconsistency and a preoccupation with the verbal statement of rules. It defines good only in terms of obedience, and discourages an evaluation of the motives that prompt disobedient acts. Finally, it encourages forms of punishment that are punitive and expiatory; the most stern punishment is the most just, and the punished child is likely to be the most obedient.[7]

The second morality of the child is dominated by reciprocity, the mutual respect of persons, and the search for distributive forms of justice. Punishment for deviant behavior is imposed, not out of a romance with expiation, but out of a need to ensure that the guilty party endures the consequences of his own act. Explanation is considered more profitable than censure. Motives become important in evaluating the moral worth of an act. And rules are considered as ways of contributing to the general welfare. They are changeable in light of evolving perceptions of

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

the common good.[8]

Piaget, of course, is well aware that his "two moralities" are models, and as such, they are replicated only as strains or tendencies in the real experience of children. But in Moral Judgment of the Child his argument consistently is political, and his "two moralities" also assume normative status. Moral immaturity is related to the persistence of adult constraint and to limited possibilities for reciprocity. Thus, the encouragement of moral maturity depends upon finding ways in which patterns of adult constraint can be interrupted. The school's strategy for moral education, at least ideally, is to restructure itself so that the task of teaching-learning does not proceed within a climate of values imposed from outside the classroom. Piaget's point is really quite radical: he identifies adult constraint with Durkheim's collective representations. And however complex Durkheim's view of society is made through acknowledging the multiform character of society, Piaget's point remains constant. Schools must not assume the responsibility for representing the values of the larger society, except for the most fundamental consensual values related to justice--values that must be presupposed in order for any social system to operate. To impose, by whatever means, a broader range of values growing out of the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

community's collective life is educationally unhealthy. Moral maturation requires opposition to Durkheim's concept of the school's priestly function, and this opposition, in turn, requires that educators declare their independence from groups who look to the schools to embody their biases.

II. The Schools as Platonic Republics

Logically extended, Piaget's line of reasoning leads to a virtually sectarian proposal: that schools ought to become parallel institutions, utopian societies, particularly as children and youth approach developmental stages where they are capable of comprehending the character and requirements of community. The suggestion is never worked out in any detail or with any precision. Indeed, at the conclusion of Moral Judgment of the Child, Piaget confesses his suspicion of all dogmatic approaches to educational reform. But the suggestion is there nevertheless, weakly, in the presentation of his biases toward student government and the Activity School.

Piaget's sectarianism is developed somewhat more extensively by Lawrence Kohlberg, although even he tends to sacrifice precision to the vagueness of liberal, democratic rhetoric. Kohlberg argues repeatedly that schools who take their moral educative function seriously must be in the business of building Platonic republics--holistic reconstructions of the educational environment.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Moral education "raises the issue of the structure of the schools," he writes, and "a complete approach to moral education means full student participation in a school in which justice is a living matter." In his essay, "Education for Justice: A Modern Statement of the Platonic View," Kohlberg adds,

> All schools need not and cannot be self-contained little Republics in which knowledge of the good is to be brought out through love and community as well as through participation in a just institution. Such schools do stand as a challenge to an educational establishment which makes a pious bow to the bag of virtues while teaching that true goodness is tested on the College Boards. The Platonic view I've been espousing suggests something still revolutionary and frightening to me if not to you, that schools would be radically different places if they took seriously the teaching of real knowledge of the good.9

Just what Kohlberg's republic would be like is left somewhat to our imaginations, although he provides a number of clues. One is simply his announcement that he has found such a republic, and that it is thriving in Rindge, New Hampshire. Quoting from the school's brochure, which he says aptly describes his observation of the school, Kohlberg writes,

> The sense of community is most strongly felt in the weekly meeting, consisting of faculty, their families, and students. Decisions are made by consensus rather than by majority rule. This places a responsibility on each member to struggle to see through his own

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

> desires to the higher needs of others and the community, while witnessing the deepest concerns of his conscience. The results of these decisions are not rules in the traditional sense, but agreements entered into by everyone and recorded as minutes.10

Clearly, then, Kohlberg is not interested in a republic dominated by childhood and youth culture, any more than he is interested in schools that are dominated by adults, or by the spirit (or spirits) of the larger society. His Platonic image is instead dominated by the idea of justice, which inhibits the imposition of the beliefs of one group on another, and, in fact, one of the school's central functions is to maintain and communicate those values which reinforce egalitarian rules-of-the-game. The ideal school is committed to recognizing the equal rights of individuals in matters that concern beliefs.

Kohlberg's agenda is designed to transform schools into communities--that is, to transform schools into groups that are mutually supportive, meaning-centering, and value-integrating. This is quite a contrast to other possible agendas which suggest that schools should operate as skills-centers, or that they should encourage a child's progress at his own rate of growth on an individualized program, or that schools should themselves be mirrors of the richness of cultural diversity. Each of these agendas may have its place, but in his radical vision, Kohlberg

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

appears to argue that schools ought also to be sources of their own life styles, growing out of the interaction of all persons directly involved in the process. Communities are not built on abstractions; they emerge over time within the painful process of arbitrating conflict and of working out practical compromises on everyday matters.

There are many points at which Kohlberg has simply not taken the time to refine his proposal for a restructured school (e.g. he has not dealt with implications of cognitive-social development for age segregation in various forms of decision-making within the school). But it is not fair to criticize him (and indirectly, Piaget) for this. Both are far more involved in other dimensions of their larger projects. What is disturbing, though, is that the logic of their argument carries them in the direction of a kind of educational sectarianism, whether or not it is clarified. Not that ideals and visions of utopia are irrelevant; not at all! The problem is that sectarianism breeds characteristic doctrines that distort our image of who man is and the way the social world works, and, also, doctrines that breed frustration with the character of activities educators must settle for.

The main trouble with sects is that they do not encourage a spirit of compromise with the powers-that-be, and the main trouble with Piaget's and Kohlberg's

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

sectarian biases is that they do not allow for Durkheim to be taken with sufficient seriousness. Perhaps, for developmental reasons, educators ought to resist being priests, enforcing the values that are widely held within a society. But the fact of life is that schools are viewed by groups within the community as powerful vehicles for the socialization of children. In the public sphere, the spirit of Durkheim reigns, and to resist is a heroic and usually tragic act. Where there is an absence of consensus in a community concerning values, schools are not exempted from enforcing life styles. Instead, schools are unavoidably placed in the position that Piaget and Kohlberg want to avoid: a situation where educators must make political judgments about what will or will not wash with the public, and what costs may or may not be involved in taking risks. Kohlberg is correct in showing how teachers often unthinkingly enforce dominant lifestyles through administrative practices in the classroom. But those same teachers, on reflection, will probably choose to continue these practices, not out of dogmatism, but as the necessary condition for the educational enterprise.

Frankly, my own biases make me very uneasy with an educational sectarianism that equates socialization into the life styles of dominant communities with adult authoritarianism. I agree with Piaget and Kohlberg that moral

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

maturity requires the ability to transcend and to criticize conventional behavior. But critical self-transcendence does not require even an implicit rejection of man's nature as an animal who is defined by his group loyalties, and by his identification with tangible communities. The ability even to speak about morality assumes communities that are able to provide the common language and perspectives necessary for communication. Communities need institutions; in fact, communities are, by definition, aggregates of mutually-reinforcing institutions. One would expect that these would embody conventional images of deviance and respectability. Schools cannot, and probably should not, be viewed as cultural islands, shaping their own life styles apart from the conventional compromises that allow for social order in the larger society.

Children should not be encouraged to pretend that they can start on the first day of history in shaping new forms of respectability and deviance within schools. What they need to find out, in one way or another, is that the patterns of respectability and deviance which the schools represent are themselves political artifacts. They are shaped within a process that is at least tolerably fluid--a process in which various associations with differing forms of power compete for the ability to impose their world views. Recognizing the fluidity of this process is

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

a healthy moment of transcendence. It is a moment that allows for affirming the dignity of one's own cultural identify and for a realistic assessment of what it takes to affect school-enforced conventionality. Piaget and Kohlberg ought to be commended for their desire to whet the appetites of children for justice, but they are wrong in thinking that this should be accomplished within schools that are artifically protected from the larger community's political compromises (of which the character of the schools is an expression).

Piaget is correct, of course, in arguing that children's societies ought to impinge on the values of the school. In fact, they do, if only through the limiting power of the child's ability to comprehend or not comprehend what teachers are saying, and in the child's overt expression of his own sense of fairness. Still, political realism is not taught by pretending that children are more powerful than they are. For many, many reasons children's societies (age-related communities) are <u>not</u> dominant in any society. To be sure, it is to the advantage of all concerned that children be encouraged in the development of cognitive and leadership skills, and society is usually willing to carve out spheres in which children can take the initiative. But these spheres are carefully maintained within acceptable boundaries of respectability, which children can and should sense.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

They also should be helped to recognize that these boundaries are changeable, yet Piaget's and Kohlberg's sectarian visions do not lead to this kind of recognition. In their anti-authoritarian orientation, they would give too much to children, and thus encourage an insensitivity to the way in which the political world works. They would turn the school into a parallel, isolate world where justice is automatically celebrated by teachers, and where beliefs are not imposed by one group on another. In so doing, they would create a mini-world without sin; and while perhaps that is an admirable aspiration, it is frustratingly out of joint with the social world that man has inhabited since Eve imposed her dietary beliefs on Adam.

III. The Less-than-Ideal Republic

Kohlberg has the good sense to recognize the difficulty of his own sectarian leanings, and, in fact, spends much of his time in delineating outlines for moral education among children that are anything but sectarian. He makes this important move when he advocates a set of procedures that he calls a "way station"--a second-best strategy in moral education. At the least, he is taking moral education from the sphere of governance to that of a formal teaching-learning situation. In Kohlberg's ideal republic, as in Piaget's Activity School, moral education is a form of democracy within which problems that matter

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

in the school's life are worked out. But in the less-than-ideal situation, the grist of moral education is a series of conflict-oriented stories. Students are exposed to higher patterns of moral judgment within free-flowing discussions, and movement upward through more mature stages purportedly occurs because students are attracted to the highest stages they can comprehend. What might have been genuine social conflict in Kohlberg's ideal republic becomes verbal argument concerning fictional situations, the stakes being considerably reduced.

Kohlberg thus retreats from the sectarian dream of a radically restructured school, and becomes an advocate, at least in the sphere of moral education, for a school that is cut off the liberal welfare model. The task ceases to be the political one of working out compromises and becomes one of moral therapy, with the teacher, who possesses the "secret" knowledge of developmental stages, serving as therapist. The thrust of the welfare model in America, of course, has always been ameliorative, directed toward reducing the punitive treatment of deviants by the judiciary, police, and the welfare agencies, as well as by educational institutions. But, in spite of its liberal orientation, the welfare model remains, by definition, paternalistic. The agenda gets set by experts. In moral education, these experts must have training in the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

cognitive-developmental tradition and must possess knowledge about the moral judgments of children at various stages.

As Kohlberg is aware, his second-best strategy leaves alone the overall structure and administration of the school. It does not touch the processes within which deviance and respectability are managed--processes that usually occur haphazardly under the pressures of maintaining classroom order and providing the conditions for formal learning. Thus, Piaget's two moralities can be expected to collide within the classroom, and even to receive a certain legitimacy in their collision. The classroom situation typically suggests in powerful, but unacknowledged ways, the respectability of what Kohlberg calls the "bag of virtues"--honesty, willingness to defer pleasure, unwillingness to cheat, respect for elders, and so on, while at the same time, the teacher-as-moral-educator may verbally be suggesting that moral choice is more complex. The situation is not compounded of ignorance. It actually is functional! Movement upward within the stages of moral judgment does seem to be possible within the schizophrenic classroom. Likewise, the ghettoizing of moral instruction allows for the school to proceed with its necessary activity of appeasing dominant groups within the larger society through reinforcing acceptable patterns

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

of moral judgment and behavior. What suffers is consistency, and the risk is large that the teacher as classroom administrator will be more clearly perceived than the teacher as moral educator. Certainly the classroom administrator has more sanctions at his disposal.

My larger point is that in his second-best strategy, Kohlberg has compromised the radicalism of Piaget's initial logic, and, indeed, his own intuitions about the requirements of effective moral education. From one perspective, Kohlberg's compromise is healthy, because his sectarian visions are finally not politically feasible in the public arena. But now, to argue the other side, I believe that his work is currently being hurt by his willingness to accept too little--by the reluctance of Kohlberg and his associates to consider, in the context of political realism, how much and what kind of restructuring in public education is possible. As a social ethicist, I am not in a position to comment on how much more work is either possible or desirable in further refinement of the Piaget-Kohlberg typology of stages as the basis for moral education. But my feeling is that, at least pragmatically, the increased value for schools of a more sophisticated structural typology may not justify an extended period of labor. At times, a return to the original gross generalizations of the fathers may yield more useful insights.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What is needed, I believe, is to devote the same empirical attention to ways in which changes in classroom administration and organization can alter moral judgment that Kohlberg gave to ways in which moral judgment is affected by participation in discussions about moral conflict. Piaget's Moral Judgment of the Child has effectively been extended by Kohlberg and others in investigating with more precision the relationships among aging, cultural factors, and patterns of moral reason. But one is almost shocked to find the impressive political discourse of Piaget being left to the vaguest kind of rhetoric.

The liberal is always in a paradoxical situation: attempting to affirm the basic soundness of institutions, while at the same time attempting to embody as much of the sectarian, radical agenda as possible within society's institutional life. As representatives of an educationally liberal tradition, Piaget's American colleagues find themselves facing just this paradox. Their problem is to be realistic about the political constraints on moral education, but to draw also on Piaget's radical judgment of educational establishments. It is this latter dimension of Piagetian liberalism that presently needs development. It is there, in the utopian vision, that the agenda for the next era is to be found.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1. See Emile Durkheim, Rules of Sociological Method, ed. G. Catlin (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1950), especially pp. 65-73

2. H. A. Prichard, "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?" Mind, Vol. 21, 1912

3. Emile Durkheim, Moral Education (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1961), especially pp. 230-232

4. Jean Piaget, The Moral Judgment of the Child (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1965), p. 360

5. Ibid., p. 361

6. Ibid, p. 189

7. Ibid., especially ch. 2

8. Ibid., especially ch. 3

9. Lawrence Kohlberg, "Education for Justice A Modern Statement of the Platonic View," in James Gustafson, et. al., Moral Education (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 83

10. Ibid., p. 83